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A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

O F T H E

Reverend Mr. *JAMES FALL.*



Price Six-pence.

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1877

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SERMON



DEATH

OF THE

Reverend Mr. JAMES EARLE

1877

Price sixpence.

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Rev^d Mr. *JAMES FALL,*

Who departed this Life *October 2,*

In the Twenty-ninth Year of his Age.

PREACHED *October 10, 1756.*

By *JOHN POTTS*, V. D. M. *R*

Published at the Request of the CHURCH.

L O N D O N:

Printed by DANIEL NOTTAGE: And sold
by GEORGE KEITH, at the *Bible and Crown,*
in *Gracechurch-Street.* MDCCLVI.

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JOHN XX. 17.

*I ascend unto my Father, and your Father;
and to my God, and your God.*

AT the Request of this Mourning Church it is, that I now appear in the Place of your late Preaching and Toiling, but (*I trust*) now Triumphant and Praising Pastor; whose Decease, and the almost irreparable Loss that is sustained thereby, I am called to improve. A Loss, which affects some of you in the Character of a Church, others of you in the Character of surviving Relatives, and all of us in the Character of Christians and Fellow-Mortals. You, as a Church, have lost a faithful Watchman; you, his surviving Consort, an indulgent Husband; you, his aged Parents, a dutiful Son; you, his dear Brethren, an affectionate Brother; and we Christians and Fellow-Mortals, a Friend of Zion, and a Man *that hath seen Affliction*.

The Deceased not having left any particular Text to be discoursed upon as the Subject of his Funeral Sermon, but having, upon the Eve of his Exit, addressed some Members and Brethren of the Church, took his Farewell of them in those Words, *I ascend unto my Father, and your*

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Father;

Father ; and to my God, and your God. Hence this Text appears rather eligible, than another, upon this solemn Occasion ; inasmuch as, we are informed, these Words were uttered by him, when Men (however vainly verbose they may be at other Times) are in sober earnest. And if any Words demand our Credence, move our Compassion, or rivet a memorable Impression upon Mortals more than others ; surely Words dropping from the Lips of a dying Man, Minister or Christian, as these did from the Deceased, your dear Pastor, merit the Assent of your Understandings, tend to move your Affections, and fix an indelible Impress upon your Memories ; and the rather, inasmuch as they were originally delivered from the Lips of him that spoke as never Man spoke, in order to dissipate the Clouds, suppress the Fears, revive the Hopes, and confirm the Faith, of the mourning Disciples, who were in the Depths of Distress, upon the Account of the Death of their Lord and Master.

From the preceding and subsequent Context, we may observe the dolorous Circumstances that the Disciples of Christ were in at this Conjunction ; some were betraying him, others denying him, some doubting in him, and all deserting him. Their Lord, their Leader, and Teacher, was departed from them ; they were dispersed and divided one from another, not one was undistressed ; their Adversaries were exulting over them, and ridiculing of them. In brief, they were

were every Way benighted; and it was among one of the darkest Periods that ever did betide the Church of Christ: But, as the darkest Hour is sometimes preceding the Dawn of Day, so was it in the Church's Case here; for while some of the distressed Disciples, particularly a Woman, *Mary Magdalen*, to whom Christ's Ministry had been made eminently useful, and whose Person was consequently dear, while she was wandering about between the Society and the Sepulchre, the Meeting-place of the Disciples and the Burying-place of Christ, where she was standing and weeping, she is very agreeably surprised with the Sight of her Saviour, which so much transported and overjoyed her, that it is no wonder she wanted to embrace him; which yet Christ would not indulge her in, but divinely prohibited her, *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father, i. e.* according unto *Augustine*, the Time for embracing will be in Heaven, and not here. There we shall have Time and Place for pure, spiritual, and eternal Embraces; or, as *Camero* and *Calvin* gloss it, *Touch me not, i. e.* "Thou mistakest my present State, "and doatest too much upon my human Nature, "as if I were already ascended unto the *ἀνέν*, "the very Summit of my Exaltation: No, I am "not yet ascended." * Christ would not be touched by *Mary*, because she was minding on-

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ly

* Symphonia Prophet. & Apost. Tangi à Maria Christus noluit, quia nihil nisi carnalia respiciebat.

ly carnal Things ; or, according to the Interpretation of more modern Divines, it is, *q. d.* in the present circumstance Case, it is not proper to spend Time in Expressions of Affection, by Embraces and Touches of this Nature ; therefore says he, *Touch me not.* Hence he dispatches her immediately with a consolatory Message to his dejected Disciples, *Go, tell my Brethren, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ; and to my God, and your God.*

In which Words we have two Things observable :

(1.) The Purport of the Message, *I ascend*, ἀναβαίνω ; *I ascend*, it is put in the Present Tense, as if he had been ascending, though he did not ascend for some considerable Time thereafter. This is conformable to the sacred Phraseology of Scripture in other Parts, such as that in the seventeenth Chapter of this Gospel, Verse 4. where Christ in his Prayer says, *I have finished the Work, which thou gavest me to do*, though he had not, as yet, in Fact died ; nevertheless, in respect of the absolute Certainty of it, he spoke thereof in the Preterit Tense, as if it were already done. Thus, in our Text, he says, *I ascend*, though he did not actually ascend for some Weeks after ; but in regard of the Certainty of the Event, and inasmuch as every Thing that he did, between that Time and his Ascension, bore a Connection with it, therefore he says, *I ascend.*

(2.) The relative Form wherein he ascended, *To my Father, and your Father ; to my God, and your*

your God. It is not, *I ascend to our Father, and our God*; but it is *to my Father; and your Father; to my God, and your God.* Indicating thereby, that though there was a Proximity of Relation between Christ and his Brethren, that they had each one God and Father; yet that one God and Father stood related unto them in different Lights; such as, that he was the God and Father of Christ, in respect of his eternal Generation, which none can declare; in respect of his eternal Destination to his mediatorial Function, *Prov. viii. 23. I was set up from everlasting, I was anointed,* as the Hebrew Root *יָדַע* bears, having a Reference unto a Rite observed among the Jews, of anointing their Kings and Priests upon being inaugurated into the sacerdotal and regal Office. He was the God and Father of Christ in respect of eternal Confoederation or Covenant. Hence it is said, *Psalms lxxxix. 3. I have made a Covenant with my Chosen, or with my Chosen One*; for the Word is singular in the first Language. He was the God and Father of Christ in respect of the mysterious Constitution of his Person, as the Divine *Θεοῦ γεννητός*, the God-Man. *The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, John i. 1. Great is the Mystery of Godliness, God was manifest in the Flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16.* “All other Things, as a very considerable Author expresses himself *, were produced and effected by an outward Emanation of Power from God, *He said, Let there be Light, and there was Light*; but this

* Dr. Owen's ΧΡΙΣΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ.

this Assumption of our Nature into hypostatical Union with the Son of God ; this Constitution of one and the same individual Person in two Natures, so infinitely distinct as these of God and Man, whereby the Eternal was made in Time, the Infinite became finite, the Immortal mortal, yet continued Eternal, Infinite, Immortal ; is that singular Expression of Divine Wisdom, Goodness and Power, wherein God will be admired and glorified to all Eternity, &c.” He is the God and Father of Christ in respect of the superlative Unction of the Spirit ; for he was *anointed with the Oil of Joy and Gladness above his Fellows*, above any of his Brethren. He is the God and Father of Christ, in respect of the new Kind of Relation in God, as his God and Father, *Psalms lxxxix. 26. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God.* Hence one * of the most pious and learned Divines of the present Century expresses himself thus upon this Point : “ Our Lord Jesus had God to his Father by eternal Birthright ; but there was a new Relation constituted between God and Christ as the second *Adam*, Head of the Covenant founded upon his undertaking and fulfilling the Covenant Condition, whereby he became Heir of God as his Heritage, according to that of the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 17. Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ* ; namely, with Christ as primary Heir.”

But then he is the God and Father of his Brethren in respect of their Election and Predestination,

* *Boston de Fœdere Gratia.*

tion, *Ephes. i. 4, 5.* In respect of their natural Creation and spiritual Regeneration, *John iii, &c.* In respect of their Adoption, *Rom. viii. 15.* but *you have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby you cry, Abba, Father.* In respect of their Vocation, *1 Cor. i. 26.* for *you see your Calling, Brethren.* In fine, he is their God and Father in respect of their Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification, *Rom. viii. 30.* Moreover, *whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Thus these are the Respects in which it may be said that he is *my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God;* and these are the Words with which Christ dispatched *Mary* unto his Brethren, informing them of his Ascension; which Words may be summed up, in their Sense and Scope, in a short Paraphrase thus: I am conscious what solicitous Care fills the Souls of my dear Brethren; I am Witness to what a weeping Way they are in, upon the Account of my Death and Absence from them; but, that they may be no longer depressed with Sorrow, Go, carry this Message to them, That all is and shall be well, notwithstanding the present gloomy Aspect; for *I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.*

Now divers Doctrines might be deduced from these Words, such as,

1st, That Christ's Care for his Church and People is constant.

2dly, That Christ's Ascension is the Church's Consolation.

3dly,

3dly, That as there are near Relations between Christ, his God, Father, and the Church ; so there are likewise dear Affections, *I ascend to my Father, &c.*

But the doctrinal Observation, which is more directly adapted to the Design of this Discourse, is as follows, *viz.*

As that which much assuaged the Sorrow of Christ's mourning Disciples, in his Departure from them, was the Promise of his ascending to his Father, and their Father ; to his God, and their God ; so that which may stem the teeming Torrent of a Church's Tears, upon the Departure of a dear Pastor, is, that he could say, *I ascend to my Father, and your Father ; to my God, and your God.*

It is obvious, that this Text and Doctrine would lead me to treat that Article of Revelation, respecting the Ascension of Christ ; which though I cannot altogether omit making some Remarks upon, yet it is the last Branch of this Doctrine that we would principally direct your Attention unto, namely, that that which may stem the Torrent of a Church's Tears upon the Death of a dear Pastor, is, that he could say, *I ascend to my Father, &c.* In the Prosecution of which Doctrine we would essay to observe the following Order and Method :

I. Remark a few Things relative to the Ascension of Christ.

II. Treat somewhat relative to these Tears a Church is disposed to drop upon the Departure of a dear Pastor.

III. In-

III. Inquire what it is to ascend to one's Father and God.

IV. Inquire into the Import of these Expressions, *My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God.*

V. Deduce some Inferences from the whole.

We return then to the First of these general Heads, which is to remark a few Things relative to Christ's Ascension.

I. That what is said with respect to Christ's Ascension is to be understood literally and properly with regard unto his Human Nature, but figuratively and metaphorically with respect unto his Divine Nature.

The *Lutherans**, in order that they may establish their Ubiquitarian Doctrine, will have what is said of Christ's Ascension to be wholly figurative; but, in Opposition unto this Ubiquity of the Human Nature, we aver Christ ascended Locally, Corporeally, and Visibly, in Point of his Humanity, *Acts i. 9. While they beheld, he*
C
was

* *Ameſ. Med.* Ascenſio totius fuit perſonæ; naturæ tamen divinæ non convenit niſi figurate, ſed humanæ naturæ maxime propriè convenit, &c.

Franciſcus Turretinus, S. S. Theologiæ Doctör & Profeſſor, ſic ait, Negant Chriſtum vere & propriè aſcendiſſe, ſed tantum figurate, quatenus ſubduxit præſentiam ſuam viſibilem mundo, licet in mundo adhuc manent inviſibiliter, & cœlum in quod aſcendit pertendunt non eſſe cœlum ſupremum, ſeu tertium, ſed beatitudinem & regnum Dei, quod ſit ubique. Itaque volunt, cœlum in quod Chriſtus aſcendit non eſſe locum quendam corporeum ſupra cœlos aſpectabiles, &c.

Nos Chriſtum localiter, viſibiliter, & corporaliter è terra in cœlum tertium, &c.

was taken up, and a Cloud received him out of their Sight ; and as he ascended, so in like manner shall he descend. Hence says the Apostle John, Behold, he cometh with Clouds, and every Eye shall see him. He ascended with a Cloud, he shall descend with Clouds ; for this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into Heaven, Acts i.

11. But though his Ascension does not so properly agree unto the Divine, as the Human Nature ; yet in Virtue of the personal Union of the two Natures, that which is proper to, and the Act of one Nature, as such, is expressed as the entire Act of the one Divine Person, *Acts xx. 28.*

2. The Ascension of Christ is a Demonstration of his completing the meritorious Part of our Redemption, and his consummating the Work which the Father gave him to do. He had a Baptism to be baptized with, a Cup to drink, and a Decease to accomplish at *Jerusalem*. All which he having finished, his Ascension to the Father was a full Demonstration of. Heaven's Door was immediately opened for his Reception. Upon his Return from the Field of Battle, adorned with all the Trophies of his Conquest, he was received with all the Demonstrations of heavenly Triumph : He ascended to the Father with the Keys of Hell and Death hanging at his Girdle, which he had wrested out of the Hands of his Enemies : *He ascended up on high, he led Captivity captive*. He ascended with sounding Trumpets : *God is gone up with a Shout, the Almighty with the Sound of a Trumpet.*
When

When a Generalissimo returns from the Field of Battle with all the Honours of War, his Enemies conquered and led captive, how doth every one rejoice to see the Hero clad with Garlands? They salute him with a Welcome home, and congratulate his Success. Thus when Christ, the conquering Captain of our Salvation, returned from the bloody Campaign with much Treasure and Spoil, all the celestial Throng welcomed him home with united Acclamations, a general Joy diffused itself universally through the heavenly Hosts, and the lofty Arch of the magnificent Dome loudly echo'd with his Praise. Might we here give Scope to Thought, we conceive, if ever there was a Time wherein the Joys of Heaven could be sweeter and stronger than another, these are the two remarkable Times, the one of which is past, and the other is yet future. 1st, There is the Day wherein Christ ascended to his Father with a Here am I, Father, and the Work finished that thou gavest me to do. There is something very moving in the sacred Story concerning *Jacob's* meeting with his Son *Joseph* after so long Absence. It is said, when he presented himself unto him, he fell upon his Neck, and wept on his Neck a good while; and *Israel* said unto *Joseph*, *Now let me die, since I have seen thy Face; because thou art yet alive.* But what was *Jacob's* Meeting with his *Joseph*, to the Meeting of God the Father with Jesus his dear Son, if I may so speak? Did Angels usher in the Day of Christ's Nativity with *Glory to God in the highest, Peace on Earth, Good-will towards Men,*

and shall we suppose they were supinely silent upon the Day wherein he ascended from *Galilee* to the Glory of his Father? If so, it was because the striking Scene was too sublime even for these Sons of God so suddenly to sing upon. Ye Patriarchs, who saw his Day afar off, and *αγαλλιασται*, leaped in a Transport of Desire at the distant Prospect thereof; Ye Prophets, that in sacred Oratory display his majestic March from *Edom* and *Bozrah* with a *Who is this that cometh?* how did you stand to see your God return from yonder World, and sit down in human Nature like a Man beside you in Heaven! Sure, were you such Mortals as once existed here, you could not live in thus seeing God. The second Time wherein we conceive the Joys of Heaven will be sublimated with superlative Sweetness and Strength, will be, when not only Christ himself ascends to Heaven, but when he ascends together with his whole Family of Elect, Angels and redeemed Saints, housing of them in Heaven, just before the general Conflagration of all Things, and the universal Blaze of the World. When Christ thus appears, not only with a *Here am I*, but *I am here* with the Children thou hast given me; how inconceivably sublime must the Season be! Then indeed may the august Assembly lawfully say, as what the Apostle did in his *Tabor* Transports, *It is good for us to be here*, to be ever with the Lord.

His General Head was to treat somewhat relative unto these Tears, that a distressed Church

Church is disposed to drop upon the Departure of a dear Pastor.

If then, We are disposed thereunto both from the Springs of Nature and Grace; and he must be a Stranger to the Laws both of the one and the other, that hath not experienced, how each of them separately, and both of them conjunctly, will conspire together to promote this Act. I remember that Philosopher, who by some is designed the Secretary of Nature, when he is giving the specifick Difference betwixt Man and other Creatures, defines him thus: *Animal risibile*, a Creature that can laugh; but it is equally true of him, that he is *Animal lacrymans*, a weeping Creature. Hence to weep is commonly the first Work we do in this World. The Apathy of the Stoicks, as it is not the Genius and Disposition of a Christian, so neither is it any Doctrine of his. We find the sinless Saviour himself shedding Tears at the Grave of *Lazarus* his Friend; and it was observed by the *Jews*, who came to condole these two Mourners, *Martha* and her Sister *Mary*, that when *Mary* arose in haste and went out, say they, *She goes unto the Grave to weep there*. Thus at *Jacob's* Funeral, *Gen. l. 10, 11.* such was the Mourning thereat, that the Name of the Place where he was interr'd was afterwards called *Abelmizraim*, i. e. the Mourning of the *Egyptians*; for *there they mourned with a great and very sore Lamentation; and he made a Mourning for his Father seven Days. And when the Inhabitants of the Land, the Canaanites, saw the Mourning in the Floor of Atad, they said,*

This

This is a grievous Mourning unto the Egyptians. And as Nature will produce a Torrent of this Kind, so likewise Grace, *Psalms cxxxvii. 1. By the Rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.* Their Heart affected their Eye. Thus powerful are the Laws of Grace! Yea, Nature and Grace both conspire together to promote this Act, as in the Instance connected with our Text, where we find *Mary*, to whom Christ's Ministry had been remarkably dear, for through it she had been dispossessed of seven Devils; she, so to speak, is deluged in a Flood of Tears, which both Christ and his Angels strive to assuage, *Woman, why weepest thou? Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?* To the same Purpose, *Luke vii. 38. And stood at his Feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his Feet with Tears.* Thus, my Beloved, such as have received either the Beginning or the further Increase of Grace, under the Ministry of your late deceased and dear Pastor, it is much if you refrain from dropping a Tear this Day, when you see his Seat empty, who was lovely and pleasant to you in Life; and though Death hath spread its sable Dress in this Place, yet you are not thereby separated from him in Point of Affection, nor as conjunct Members of the vital and living Head.

2dly, That which swells the Torrent of a Church's Tears, upon the Death of a dear Pastor, is the Consideration of his being removed almost in the Beginning of the Bloom of Life, and the Meridian of his Usefulness. " Had, say
" you,

“ you, Heaven indulged us with his Life and
 “ Ministry for a Date of many Years, we possi-
 “ bly would have more easily dispensed with his
 “ Departure. But, Pity it was ! to pluck this
 “ Fruit, and crop this Flower, while it was, as
 “ it were, but yet green, only budding, and not
 “ full blown ! As the Primitiæ and First-fruits
 “ of his Ministry were so savoury unto us, as
 “ the Sample was so substantial and sweet, we
 “ had raised Expectations of being satiated
 “ with the Stock ; as the Prelibation and Fore-
 “ taste was so delicious, we could not but desire
 “ a deeper Draught. But, lo ! the Desire of
 “ our Eyes hath been taken from us in one
 “ Day with a Stroke. Our Nuptial Day hath,
 “ before the Close of it, become a Funeral Day ;
 “ our Marriage Day hath, in a manner, been
 “ the Dying Day of our dear Pastor ; the Re-
 “ lation hath scarce been firmly fixed, before it
 “ has been dissolved ; we promised ourselves
 “ that the Parent’s Life would have been pre-
 “ served, upon the Appearance of the precious
 “ Fruit such a Parent seemed pregnant with :
 “ But, alas ! we are disappointed ; the Sun, that
 “ appeared in the Morning with lucid Bright-
 “ ness in our Horizon, soon was mantled in sable
 “ Darkness, and obumbrated behind the obscure
 “ Clouds of Death.” Thus this Church, as a
 Widow, is prompted to weep, being deprived
 of the Help-meet that Heaven provided. But,
 my Brethren, though you mourn under all these
 melancholy Circumstances, and though your
 Minister was but a Youth in respect of Years,
 yet

yet permit me to say, that I apprehend that in these two or three Years of his Ministry among you, *what through Fears within and Fightings without*—(abstracting from the onerous Nature of the ministerial Office, which though *Honos*, an Honour, yet is *Onus*, a Burden too weighty for any human Shoulder to support) more Strength, Health and Spirits hath been exhausted and spent by him, than there is by others in twenty or thirty. It was observed by the *Jews* of Christ, that Prince of Preachers, (who was about the Space of three Years in his publick Ministry) that the Age of fifty seemed to sit upon his Countenance, while he was but about thirty; say they, *Thou art not yet fifty Years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* You will remember, that as the Time of your Pastor was in the Father's Hand, so the Work that his Father had given him to do was finished; he had not another Soul to call, to convert, to confirm, edify or comfort, otherwise he would have been further spared unto you.

3dly, Another Thing that swells the Torrent of a Church's Tears, upon the Decease of a dear Pastor, may be the Deportment of a Church, or some Members thereof, towards him. A Church and People may sometimes over-rate their Ministers, as when they have their Eyes more fixed upon the Abilities and Qualifications of their Ministers, than upon Him that hath qualified them. In this Case the Lord speaks as he did to *Samuel*, when under a Deception with regard to *Eliab*, saying, *Surely the Lord's Anointed is before me.* But this Error was corrected by the Lord's

Lord's bidding of him *look not on his Countenance, nor on the Height of his Stature.* A Church may overrate their Pastor, when they have more Dependence upon the Gifts, Graces, Talents, and other Endowments bestowed upon him, than they seem to put upon the Bestower himself: *Let a Man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God.* Churches overrate their Ministers, when they are ready to applaud and praise their Pastor above what is either prudent or proper. This they do when they speak more to the Praise of a Minister, than of his Master Christ; when they are almost ever passing boundless Encomiums upon their Pastor, considering him rather as an Angel, than an earthen Vessel. But, on the contrary, Churches are sometimes ready to underrate their Ministers, as when they do not esteem their Ministry, their Office, nor reverence them as the Servants of God, and Ambassadors of Christ; their Exhortations, their Admonitions, their Reproofs, their Labours, and the like, are not attended unto with Circumspection. Hence this may give Occasion to the dropping of a Tear, that, in this Point, Professors should so much symbolize with the Profane, who generally look upon the Ministers of the Lord as very little and cheap. Similar to the *Egyptians*, of whom it is said, *Every Shepherd was an Abomination unto them*, Gen. xlv. 34. Oh, what Pity is it, that any, professing the Name of Christ, should depreciate his Ministers, should be more disposed to expose their Infirmities, than conceal them! It was a

laudable Piece of Conduct in the two Sons of Noab, when their Father's Nakedness was exposed, that they *took a Garment and went backward*, in order to cover his Shame; they *went backward*, signifying that they would not see, nor look upon his Infirmary themselves; and *they took a Garment*, signifying that they would prudently apply these Means that might prevent others from observing it. Is it not Matter of Regret, that in these Dregs of Days many do clip the Credit of Christ's Ministers; and the more so, that Church-Members should do this; yea, and that even the Ministers of Christ should demean themselves thus? It is a sad Note of *Bernard's*, that the Church hath sometimes had, *Pacem à Paganis, sed raro aut nunquam à Filiis*; *Peace sometimes from Pagan Persecutors, but seldom or never any Peace from our own Children*. Is it not strange that we, who are the Ministers of Peace, who pray and preach for the Peace and Prosperity of others, should notwithstanding have so many Adversaries? That these very Men, whose Salvation we have been studying, praying and preaching for, should yet be seeking our Condemnation? What an unnatural Thing is it, as an old Divine expresses it, that we should strive to bring them to Death, whose very Calling is to bring Men to Life? It was a Brand of Infamy, *Hos. iv. 4. For this People are as they that strive with a Priest*; *q. d.* Was there none to fall out with but the Priest, even he that offered up their Sacrifice for them? Well, if any Thing of this Kind has obtained in Churches,

Churches, it may exaggerate the Distress thereof upon the Departure of a valuable Pastor.

4thly, Another Thing that adds unto the Grief of a Church, upon the Death of the Pastor thereof, is, that they shall enjoy his useful Labours no longer: They shall no longer have him anxiously studying (as one travailing in Birth) through painful, deep, and difficult Meditation, and alternately engaged in strong Supplication: They shall no longer hear his Feet upon the Mountains, bringing glad Tidings of Good, delivering that which he hath been preparing for them, by Prayer and Meditation, with all the Symptoms of solicitous Care for their Souls, reaching a Word of Conviction to one, of Consolation to another, of Confirmation to another, and a Word of Instruction to All: They shall no longer see and hear him, as an humble Suppliant, addressing the Throne of Grace for them, as for his own Soul: They shall no longer see him administering the Ordinances of Grace unto them, neither baptising of them, nor breaking Bread among them: They shall no longer have his friendly Visits and Advice: In a Word, They shall no longer have his Company and Converse, that hath been pleasant unto them either in theirs or his own House. Thus, when we reflect upon such Things, we are influenced to drop a Tear at the Funeral of a faithful Minister.

5thly, Another Thing that adds to the Distress of a Church, upon the Death of a Pastor, is, the small Prospect that they may

have of obtaining another, so promising and profitable to their Souls, as he whom they have been deprived of: It is moving to observe the Appearance of a plentiful Harvest when there is a Penury of Hands, few, very few faithful Labourers, in order to reap it: *The Harvest truly is great, but the Labourers are few*, that are furnished with proper Abilities to labour with Discretion and Fidelity. It will be a puzzling Question, as the judicious *Durham* observes in his Exposition upon the Revelations, put to many one Day; “Man, who made thee a “Minister? Who gave thee a Commission” to treat for Christ, when there are so few that can give any tolerable satisfactory Account of their assuming that Office in a Consistency with the sacred Canon; yea, when there are so many who, though they bear the Name of Ministers of the Gospel, are no more than Ministers of the Letter, and, instead of being Ambassadors of Heaven, are more properly those of Hell, and Factors of the Devil? Well, when such are the discouraging Prospects in a Church, and so small an Appearance of the Lord’s giving of them a Pastor according to his own Heart, to feed them with Knowledge and Understanding, it is no Wonder that Churches in a widowhood State do weep under such Circumstances.

6thly, Another Thing which adds to the Affliction of a Church, upon the Departure of a Pastor, may be, the sad Aspect of growing Grievances therein; such as, Error, Animosity, Sedition, Division, and the like: This *Paul*

forefaw would be the Fate of the Church at *Ephesus*, after his Departure from them; *For I know this, that after my Departure shall grievous Wolves enter in among you, not sparing the Flock. Also of your own selves shall Men arise, speaking perverse Things, to draw away Disciples after them,* Acts xx. 29, 30. Discord in a Church, among the Members thereof, has often been found to prove more prejudicial unto her than Persecution without. Schisms in Churches are like Rents in our Garments, that make us look mean and ridiculous to Spectators. Breaches in a Church are like broken Bones in the Body, that give exquisite Disquietude and Pain. Primitive Churches have not been so perfect as to be void of Pratlers, *Diotrepbes*-like, *Prating against us with malicious Words*, 3 John, 10. Wherefore, when the above Things obtain amongst a Church and People, they certainly tend to swell the teeming Torrent of a Church's Tears.

The Third Head in the Method was, to inquire what it is to ascend to one's Father and God.

And here I am at a Loss to delineate unto you the particular Nature of what it is to go to one's Father and God; for it is that which is ineffable, invisible, inaudible, and inconceivable: *Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him.* Indeed the Eye of Man hath seen much, and heard more; but neither the Eye nor Ear hath seen or heard what God hath thus laid

laid up for his Elect; yea, that which is still more striking is, that it hath not entered into the Heart of Man to conceive of it. The Heart of Man we may all know (who are conscious of the Motions and Operations of our own Minds) will conceive of many Things; yea, it can conceive of Things which are mere Nonentities, which never had any Existence or Being; but yet it hath not entered into the Heart of Man to conceive of what God hath prepared for them that love him. Howbeit,

1st, To ascend to one's Father and God is, to ascend from all Sin and from all Sorrow. *Psalms xv. 1, Lord, who shall abide in thy Tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy Hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh Righteousness, and speaketh the Truth in his Heart. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, Rev. xxi. 27.* Thus, when the Soul ascends unto the Father, it is totally and eternally separated from Sin; it shall be delivered, not only from that turbulent Inmate, indwelling Sin, but it shall be delivered from the very Being of it, and all the direful Effects that follow after it. When the Soul ascends unto its Father and God, then its filthy Raiment shall be thrown away, and it shall be prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband; *Psalms xlv. 13. The King's Daughter is all-glorious within; her Cloathing is of wrought Gold; she shall be brought unto the King in Raiment of Needle-work.* The Soul, when it ascends

cends unto the Father at Death, shall not ascend, as it hath often done the Hill of *Zion* below, the Assembly of Saints here, with a sad, a sinning, and sorrowful Soul; but it shall ascend with Songs of Praise; for it shall be brought with Gladness great, and Mirth on every Side, into the Palace of the King, and there it shall abide: Mirth shall be upon the Side of the Bridegroom and his Friends, and upon the Side of the Bride and her Friends. *1 Kings vi. 32*, we read, that at the Door that gave Entrance into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, or Holy of Holies, there was a Palm-tree; the Holy of Holies was a Type of Heaven, and the Palm-tree was an Emblem of Victory and Conquest over Enemies. Thus the great Multitude which *John* beheld, that no Man could number, of all Nations and Kindreds and People and Tongues, were cloathed with white Robes, and Palms in their Hands; and the Armies in Heaven are represented as riding upon white Horses, cloathed in fine Linen, white and clean: Their riding upon white Horses is a Token of Victory, and their having Palms in their Hands is a Sign of Triumph, upon the Account of Victory. Now, as there was a Palm-tree at the Entrance of the Holy of Holies, so at the Soul's Entrance into the Presence of God it shall bear Palms in its Hand, as a Token of Victory over all its Enemies, Sin, Satan, and the World.

2dly, To go to one's Father and God is, to go to his House and Palace: *John xiv. 2*, *In my Father's House are many Mansions*, &c. The Elect
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of God are by Nature utterly unfit, and it is above the Dexterity of the greatest human Artist to prepare them for it; wherefore the Father, who loved and elected them from everlasting, gave them to his Son to be redeemed in Time: The Son paid the Price of their Redemption, that so stern Justice might not stop their Entrance into this Rest; and the Holy Ghost, through his omnipotent Agency, prepares them in Point of Meetness, to be the constituent Members of this House: Hence it is said to be a House prepared for them every Way well accommodated, and they are a People prepared for it, according to their Character and Dignity, as a Kingdom of Kings and Priests unto God.

3dly, To ascend to one's Father and God is, to go to the immediate Presence of God and the Father: *John xvii. 24, I will that they also be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me.* All the Ideas that we can form of being in the immediate Presence of God, are inadequate unto the Nature of the Thing: Does his gracious Presence here make such a remarkable Alteration upon us, upon our Hearts and Affections, upon our Manners, and upon all our Works? Oh! what must the glorious and immediate Presence of God in Heaven do, if his gracious Presence here will make us deny ourselves the dearest Enjoyments; yea, to esteem them, as *Paul* did, Loaves and Dung, ΣΚΥΒΑΛΑ, or Dog's Meat, according to the Emphasis of the Word; what must his glorious Presence do in Heaven? What! will the Presence

sence of God here turn a Prison into a Palace? as great *Rutherford* dated some of his Letters, when under Confinement, "From my Palace" at such a Place: Will his Presence here make a Wilderness more welcome and delightful to the Soul, as it did to *Moses*, than all the Splendor and Brilliancy of *Pharaoh's* Court? Will the Presence of God make the dark Region of the Shadow of Death more amiable than the Gate of Life? as it did to *David*: Will his Presence here make a fiery Furnace more eligible than falling down, as many do, to a golden Image? as it did to the Three Childen: In short, Will his Presence here make that which is a partial Hell a petty Heaven? What, then, must this his Presence be in Heaven, when we ascend to our God and Father?

4thly, To ascend unto one's God and Father is, to go to the Society of God and the Father, to the Society of a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: But here we are again non-plus'd, and amazed on every Side, to form Conceptions of the Nature of that social Communion amongst this Trinity, the sacred Three; it is Communion correspondent unto their undivided Essence and Nature; and such will the Society of the Saints in Heaven be, conformable to the Nature of the Place and Company: is the Society of the Saints here so sweet, that *David*, a King dignified with all regal Honours, declares, that with the Saints on Earth, and the Excellent, was all his Delight, *Psalms* xvi. 3: And, is the Communion of the Churches of

Christ so comfortable unto the Saints, that a conscientious Soul cannot rest without enquiring after it, saying, *Tell me, O thou whom my Soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy Flocks to rest at Noon?* What then must the celestial Communion be in the general Assembly and Church of the First-born? But then, though all Saints have their Imperfections here, something in their Behaviour or Turn of Temper that is disagreeable, like dead Flies amongst precious Ointment; yet there they shall be perfect, without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, and all natural as well as moral Infirmities shall be removed from them: There also shall we enjoy the familiar Fellowship of Angels, these Spirits that we would now be amazed to see in our present mortal Frame; there shall we converse with them freely: These Spirits, that were once our Guardians, will then be our Companions: These, that were ministering Spirits sent forth from God to minister unto us, shall be Members together with us in this Society: Such will the Society be among these that ascend to God and the Father; *Heb. xii. 22, 23, But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels; to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of All, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant.*

5thly,

5thly, To ascend to God and the Father is, to go to the Felicity and Joy of God and of the Father: *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord*, Matt. xxv. 21. The Expression is very peculiar, *The Joy of thy Lord*; that Joy which thy Lord enjoys, that Felicity which thy Lord hath the Fruition and Possession of, enter thou into it: This Joy far transcends every other Joy, arising from the actual Enjoyment of something loved or desired; such as, nuptial Joy, that of the Bridegroom and Bride; the Joy of Children, as that which a Woman hath when a Man-Child is born into the World; the Joy of Conquest, as that which Men have when they divide the Spoil; or, the Joy of Harvest; for it is incomprehensible Joy, because it is the Joy of God. When the Soul enters into this Joy, it shall no more bemoan itself with a *Woe is me! that I sojourn in Mesek, and dwell in the Tents of Kedar*; because then Joy shall not enter into us, as sometimes a little does here, but then we shall enter into it; that Joy, which only like a Drop enters into the Redeemed here, they shall enter the boundless Ocean of, when they ascend to their God and Father.

IVth Head was to inquire into the Import of these Expressions, *My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God*.

1st then, They import the foederal Relation betwixt God and the Soul. God is indeed a God and Father unto all by Creation, but a foederal God and Father only to such, for whom Christ susceped and compleated Covenant Conditions.

This *David* declares in his dying Sayings, *Yet hath he made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all Things, and sure.* And to this Purpose does the Prophet speak, *Jer. xxxi. 33. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel—I will be their God, and they shall be my People.* God may be a People's God in divers Respects, and yet they may die his Enemies, and be undone in Hell for ever. He may be their God by Creation, He may be their God by Preservation, He may be their God by Benefaction, He may be their God by Profession, and their God by Dominion; but if God is our Fœderal, Covenant God and Father, we are his peculiar Favourites; and though all the Devils in Hell, all our Lusts, and all our Idols, should say to the contrary, yet we shall be his People, and he will be our God; for *I will*, and *ye shall*, is the very Soul (so to speak) of the everlasting Covenant of Grace.

2dly, As they import a fœderal Relation betwixt God and the Soul, so likewise they import a fraternal Relation betwixt the Church of Christ, and such as can say, *I go to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.* There is a blessed Brotherhood that subsists among the Members of Christ's Body and Church. Hence they are all the Sons of God, they have all one and the same Father, *1 John iii. 1.* they have all one and the same Nature, *2 Pet. i. 4.* for they are made Partakers of the Divine Nature; they have all one and the same Faith in Christ, *Eph. iv. 5. one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one*
 God

God and Father of all. They have all one and the same Education, Isa. liv. 13. All thy Children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the Peace of thy Children. Yea, they have all one and the same Fare and Provision, 1 Cor. x. 17. For we being many are one Bread, and one Body; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.

3dly, They import the fiducial Persuasion of the Soul's Filiation and Sonship; for, because we are Sons, *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* And the Soul hath some conscious Impressions, founded upon scriptural and spiritual Evidence, of its being born again; of its being a Child of God by Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; of its Filiation in Point of Adoption, *being predestinated unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ*; of its Filiation in Point of Justification, *being justified freely by his Grace, John i. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name*; of its Filiation in Point of Sanctification, *Rom. viii. 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.* Yea, in a word, a Soul that can say in its dying Moments, *I ascend unto my Father, and your Father*, imports that such a Person had something of that Faith, which the Apostle speaks of, *Rom. viii. 38. For I am persuaded, that neither Death nor Life—Things present, nor Things to come, shall be able to separate from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

4thly,

4thly, They import Ardency of Affection to God his Father, and Brethren; *my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God.* It is Property that is so powerfully productive of Love and Affection among many, when a Person can say such a one is my Father, my Brother, my Friend, my Spouse, my Minister, or the like, commonly ardent Affections breathe through such appropriating Expressions. The Marrow of the Gospel, as *Luther* observes, is in these Pronouns, *Meum, Nostrum*; and, as one says, *Tolle meum & tolle Deum*, Take away my Property, and take away God, take away Christ. Thus the Soul that can say, *I go to my God, and your God; my Father, and your Father*, surely must have strong Affections to his God and Father, as well as the Fraternity of the Faithful. Like the Bride in the Song of *Solomon*, they may be said to be sick of Love, when they can say, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his. I charge you, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of Love*, Cant. v. 8.

5thly, They import Sympathy and Commiseration. Though Christ behoved to leave this World, and go to the Father, and though he did it with Joy, he ascended triumphantly; yet, at the same time, we may read Sympathy and Commiseration in his Countenance, in his Speech, and in his Conduct. He was like unto a dying Parent, who with his expiring Breath accosts his weeping Consort and Children around his Bed, while he foresees what a merciless World he leaves them

them in; and therefore he says, as in *John xvi.* 32, 33. *The Hour is come that ye shall be scattered every Man to his own, and shall leave me alone. These Things have I spoken to you, that ye might have Peace: In the World ye shall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World.* Thus that Charity, which constrains us to think no Evil, induceth me to hope that your worthy Pastor, who expressed himself, as you have heard, with his expiring Breath, at the same time breathed forth the tender Sympathy of his Soul for you his dear Flock, for these few Sheep which he has left in the Wilderness; for these that were his Children, begotten again by his Bonds; for these that were his Relatives; and particularly for you, the Members of this Church, his Brethren and Sisters in Christ.

Vth Head in the Method was to deduce some Inferences from the whole.

This Doctrine then, that we have been upon, would admit of very copious and large Improvement, but we restrict ourselves only to what bears an immediate Respect unto this Occasion. And,

1st then, Could your deceased Pastor say with sacred Faith, *I ascend to my God, and your God; to my Father, and your Father?* If so, then I can say to you, Be not swallowed up with over much Sorrow, but rather appear concerned that you *may die the Death of the Righteous*, and that your *latter End may be like his*. For as these Things are imported in the Words of the Text, such as a federal Relation unto God, and a fidu-
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cial Persuasion of our Filiation and Sonship in him, may we not all of us then say, as *Thomas* did unto his Fellow-Disciples, *Let us also go, that we may die with him?* May not you his surviving Relatives say, *Let us go, that we may die with him?* And particularly you his afflicted Consort, may not you say, *Let me go, that I may die with him?* May not you who are Members of this Church, and particularly such of you as were Eye and Ear Witnesses to the triumphant Frame of Soul you saw your Minister in before his Dissolution, may not you say, *Come, let us go, that we may die with him?* And if such was the comfortable Nature of his Death, may not we who are Ministers, that are labouring in the Vineyard, say, *Let us go, that we may die with him?* And may not every Individual of this numerous Concourse now hearing of me say, if such was the Departure of the Deceased, *Come, let us go, that we may die with him?*

You will now expect that I should expatiate upon the Character of the Deceased: It is what I have an Aversion unto, namely, the hyperbolizing upon the Characters of the Dead in that fullsome Form so much in vogue; only I would say, *Moses, my Servant, is dead*; which, in my Sentiment, is neither saying that which is too much, nor that which is immodest, of your late Minister. *Moses's* Death was attended with some disagreeable Circumstances, notwithstanding his former flaming Eminency: And I despair, tho' I should live to *Methuselah's* Age, of ever observing, at the Demise of any Minister, Man, or Christian, that

that they died immaculate Men. As a Minister, the Deceased, in Point of Doctrine, was entirely orthodox, purely evangelical, steering an even Course betwixt the *Scylla* of *Antinomianism* on the right Hand, and the *Charybdis* of *Arminianism* on the left. Betwixt these two dangerous Extremes, as a wise Pilot, he profoundly steered; not as a Novice, that, while he endeavours to avoid one Vice, falls headlong into another: *Incidit in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim*. Your Pastor, I observed, in my short Knowledge of him, was particularly zealous against the libertine Principles of these Times: A Qualification very ornamental to a Christian, but more so to a Minister, when many are either of any Religion, or no Religion at all. I remember to have heard your Pastor say from the Pulpit, "That he would affirm, that it was at this Door almost every Error had been introduced into the World;" which none, who are conversant in Ecclesiastical History, can have Effrontry to deny.

It is observed by *Ammianus*, an Heathen Writer, and a great Friend to *Julian*, that, amongst other Devices with which *Julian* used to root out Christianity, this was one, That he gave Toleration, openly, to all the different Professions that were amongst Christians, (which then, after the Council of *Nice*, were very many,) and required no more of them, but that they should abstain from civil Discords; and so, without Fear, follow any Religion they pleased: The Words are (as they are cited by *Ludovicus Mo-*
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lineus,

lineus, p. 500) Ut consopitis civilibus discordiis, suæ quisque religioni serviret intrepidus. But God had indulged your late Pastor with Light to discern the Danger of that Way, which *Julian*, that expert Child of the Devil, had invented for the Destruction of all Religion; namely, the *Toleration of all*. In fine, for the Space of these three Years that your Pastor was among you, can you say he hath ceased to warn you? hath he not delivered the whole Counsel of God unto you? so that, if any of you perish, your Blood will be upon your own Heads, for he hath delivered his own Soul; and we trust, that, as he studied to approve himself unto God with Fidelity, so he is now most richly remunerated: Hence he, as I am told by some who visited and attended him in his last Sickness, was uncommonly indulged with the Emanations of God's Love upon his Soul, and the nearer he approached the Gates of Death, the more did he triumph: Notwithstanding his Pain was great, yet this was preponderated by the sensible Presence of his God and Father; yea, he was even afraid of returning back again to the World, when he entertained some Apprehensions of the Influence of the Prayers of his People, in order to the Protracting of his Life. This, my Friends, is a Specimen of what Sort the Death of this Watchman was, whom your Eyes shall see no more in the Flesh: He is now beyond all Persecution of Tongues; and these Things, which obtained in the short Course of his Ministry, I am sorry to say,

say, humanly speaking, abridged his Days, and broke his Heart.—He, I understand, has been a Person not exempted from the common Infelicity of *Adam's* Sons, of being altogether without an Enemy; but I apprehend it was his Felicity to die an Enemy to no Man, while he rested his declining and dying Head with such Devotion as these Words demonstrate, *I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.*

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